Bulletin of the Institute No. 262: “The necessity of this Institute is very great”

- **BOLETÍN 262** – Tricentenario de las Letras Patentes y la Bula Pontificia de Aprobación del Instituto

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We are coming to the end of a two-year period of important celebrations. **It has been three hundred years since two vital documents in our institutional identity were issued: the Royal Letters Patent that gave legal existence to the Brothers of the Christian Schools and the Papal Bull that approved the Institute and the Rule**, authorising a new Christian way of life in the Church. This edition of the Institute Bulletin wishes to celebrate this event, but with our eyes on the future.

Looking to the future is part of our Lasallian identity.
Our Community was born in this way, clearly: responding to the existent needs of the poor while looking to the future of the world with a hope founded on the faith in Jesus.

It was the desire to collaborate in the coming of the Kingdom to society that impelled John Baptist de La Salle and the first generation of Brothers to create those first communities and schools. But, as has been so well reflected in our history, what led to establish this Society of the Christian Schools was not a

premeditated plan, a brilliant intuition that came out of the blue. **At the root of our Institute is an identity that is discovered along the way, the process of encountering people in the service of a mission that is constantly seeking and expanding**. This is the institutive strength that repeatedly gives rise to ever new forms of organization: Association for the educational service of the poor.

“The necessity of this Institute is very great”. The title of this Bulletin is a quote from a conviction of identity. What is the need? It is to collaborate in bringing the Kingdom to this world by breaking the logic that, throughout history, has become entrenched in multiple systems that deepen inequality, spread hunger, exclude men and women, prevent the organic growth of people, foster the success of a few, reinforce enmities… In response to all this, **the institutional commitment is to work “together and in association” to provide a pedagogy of fraternity that creates spaces where coexistence helps us learn to live well**.

The structure with which we present the material in this Bulletin aims to follow the process of institutionalisation of the Institute. As Brother Michel Sauvage has emphasised so many times since 1998, certain moments in the life of the Institute must be understood as new foundations, as re-foundations. Not in the sense of ruptures that give rise to something else, but as moments in which the project is reborn, rediscovers the changing needs of the world and reinvents life, spirituality, community and mission. **It is the strength of Association that seeks to revitalise the forms that the charism received from the Spirit of Jesus Christ takes on in time and space.**

A first section looks at the past and focuses on the Bull of Approbation of 1725.

The text of the Bull is not well known among Lasallians. For this reason, we asked **Vincenzo Rosati**, a young Italian Lasallian, teacher of Latin, who is currently serving in Mexico, to offer us a new translation in a language closer to modern speech. We are grateful for his generosity, as well as that of the various translators.

We have included two short articles on the history of the Bull: one on the process leading up to its promulgation and another by **Brother Josean Villalabeitia** on its reception among the Brothers. In addition, there is part of the classic study by **Brother Maurice Auguste** and an unpublished contribution by an Italian scholar

who has done some work on this document. **Gianna Calandrella** has been kind enough to write an abridged version of her thesis for us.

This section concludes with the transcription of a presentation given by **Brother Pedro Gil Larrañaga** at the Seminar on Association held in October 2024. It is a note to help us situate the reading of the Bull. A reading with an eye to the future.

A second section focuses on the present.
Its starting point is the audience we had on 15 May 2025 with **Pope Leo**. We had been working towards an audience with Pope Francis, and Providence gave us his successor. The Pope's words have been very important in our history, and as we celebrated the Tercentenary of the first of those dialogues, we could not fail to seek a new dialogue.

Brother Claude Reinhardt takes up the question of the Bull and focuses on the questions that those words and Brother Josean's reflection on them raised in the Institute.

Then, various contributions help us to look at the current situation of the Institute. **Brother Carlos Gómez Restrepo**, Vicar General, reflects on the necessary step that our identity must take in order to be significant in this world and not think that we are necessary without anything changing in the context of a changing era. **Mr. Jerald Joseph**, Chair of the Institute's Commission on Justice and Peace, helps us to deepen our understanding of one of the great challenges we currently face: the ecological and socioeconomic crisis, which are one and the same.

Two articles close this section, pointing out some concrete paths forward. **Brother Pedro Gil** helps us to think about the new Lasallian Community, a Community of Brothers and lay people. And **Brother Jeyakumar Kulandaisamy** reflects on the Leavening Movement, of which he is a leading member.

The last section looks directly to the future.
Brother Martín Digilio, General Councillor, reflects on the future of the Institute within the context of a great Lasallian movement. And three young Lasallians share their insights on how they envision the Institute on the pathway to the fourth centenary of the Bull. This group includes **a woman, a lay person and a Brother. She is from PARC, the young lay person is from RELAL and the young Brother is from RELAF.**

Finally, **Brother Armin Luistro**, Superior General, offers us a word that does not close but opens reflection.

To all, thank you very much for your collaboration. And to all of you, fellow readers, our wish is that reading this Bulletin will help you grow in awareness and generosity as Lasallians. That wish becomes a prayer for each and every one of you.

Br. Santiago Rodríguez Mancini
Director of the Office of Lasallian Heritage and Research

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